

Message Text

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15

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 SCCT-01 SY-05 L-03

 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 NEA-10 SS-15 NSC-05 /078 W

 095553

R 021443Z OCT 75

FM AMEMOASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7120

INSO RUQMBE/FAA BEIRUT

FAA BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ATHENS 7552

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, GR

SUBJECT: GRENADE FOUND IN SECURE CONCOURSE AT ATHENS AIRPORT

REF: STATE 233875 (NOTAL)

1. ATHENS PRESS SEPTEMBER 15 REPORTED THAT GRENADE
DISCOVERED MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 14 IN MEN'S ROOM IN TRANSIT
LOUNGE (STERILE CONCOURSE) OF ATHENS AIRPORT (EAST TERMINAL).

2. COMATT, WHO ALSO SERVES AS BATSI, INQUIRED IMMEDIATELY AT
HELLENIC CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (HCAA) FOR DETAILS, BUT
WAS REFERRED TO POLICE. EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER REQUESTED
INFORMATION FROM POLICEN BUT WAS REFERRED TO MILITARY.
DAO MADE INQUIRIES WITH HELLENIC MILITARY, BUT DREW BLANK.

3. IN THE MEANTIME COMMATT WAS VISITED BY TWA REGIONAL SECURITY
CHIEF DANA HARRIS, WHO INFORMED COMATT THAT EVEN THOUGH
TWA WAS BOARDING FLIGHT COMING FROM TEL AVIV AND BOUND
FOR ROME AT TIME GRENADE WAS FOUND, TWA WAS NOT INFORMED
UNTIL ONE AND ONE HALF HOURS LATER, AND THEN UNOFFICIALLY.

4. COMATT MADE APPOINTMENTS FOR HIMSELF AND HARRIS TO
VISIT WITH GOVERNOR HCAA ELIAS DEROS AND ALSO WITH AIRPORT
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MANAGER PAUL GOMBOS ON OCTOVE 2. DURING MEETINGS, COMATT

EMPHASIZED INTEREST OF EMBASSY IN IMPROVED AIRPORT SECURITY AND NEED FOR BETTER EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON MATTER SUCH AS THIS. HARRIS MADE POINT THAT TWA SHOULD HAVE BEEN INFORMED IMMEDIATELY OF INCIDENT, SO THAT IT COULD HAVE UNDERTAKEN EXTRA SCREENING OF PASSENGERS, AND THAT UNLESS TWA FEELS ASSURED THAT TRANSIT LOUNGE IS INDEED STERILE, IT WOULD HAVE TO UNDERTAKE ROUTINE ADDITIONAL SCREENING OF PASSENGERS

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5. DEROS APPEARED QUITE CONCERNED, AND PROMISED TO PRESS IMMEDIATELY FOR OFFICIAL REPORT, WHICH HAS NOT YET BEEN RELEASED, ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE FINDING INCOMPLETE. BOTH DEROS AND GOMBOS BELIEVE THAT SCREENING OF PASSENGERS ADEQUATE, AND THAT GRENADE WAS CARRIED IN BY AIRPORT OR AIRLINE EMPLOYEE. POLICE HAVE THEREFORE INSTITUTED MORE RIGID CHECK OF PERSONS WITH PASSES ENTERING SECURE AREAS.

6. DEROS STATED POLICE HAVE TWO THEORIES: A) GRENADE PLACED BY AIRLINE EMPLOYEE HOPING TO SCARE POLICE INTO HIGHER LEVEL OF SECURITY. IN FAVOR OF THIS THEORY IS LOCATION OF GRENADE WHEN FOUND. GRENADE NOT FOUND IN RECEPTACLE OR OTHERWISE HIDDEN LOCATION, BUT LYING ON FLOOR IN FULL VIEW. B) GRENADE BEARER HOPING TO BOARD EL AL FLIGHT WHICH ALSO BOARDING AT THAT TIME, BUT PANICKED WHEN HE DISCOVERED THAT EL AL UNDERTAKING SECOND PASSENGER SCREENING. GOMBOS BELIEVES ONLY IN FIRST THEORY, AND ALLEGED THAT GRENADE WAS DUMMY. (DEROS IN REPLY TO DIRECT QUESTION IN HIS OFFICE, HAD STATED THAT GRENADE WAS LIVE).

7. AS A RESULT OF MEETING, TWA HAS UNDERTAKEN TO PROVIDE HCAA WITH FAA MANUAL ON OPERATION OF MAGNETOMETERS. GOMBOS PROMISED TO NOTIFY TWA IMMEDIATELY WHEN ANY FUTURE INCIDENT OF THIS TYPE TAKES PLACE, BUT ASKED TWA TO PUT ITS INTEREST IN SUCH NOTIFICATION IN WRITING. (TWA'S LETTER WILL BE FORWARDED BEFORE THE END OF THIS WEEK). EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS, IN ADDITION TO REASSERTING OFFICIAL U.S. INTEREST IN ATHENS AIRPORT SECURITY, WILL MAKE POSSIBLE IN FUTURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORE RAPID COMMUNICATIONS AND CONSULTATIONS ON SECURITY MATTERS.

8. EMBASSY WILL FORWARD OFFICIAL REPORT AS SOON AS RECEIVED.
KUBISCH

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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